

## **Role of Non-Formal Basic Education in Rural Development in Punjab**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Due to population explosion and swiftly increasing demand for education even developed countries are unable to overcome the prevailing challenges through formal system of education. Most of the developing countries are in miserable situation regarding level of education and literacy. Attacking poverty has become an international concern for placing in the paradigm of 'education and learning for sustainable development' in consideration of the reality that almost half of the world's population live in poverty. Pakistan is the sixth populous country in the world and unfortunately, more than half of the population is living below the poverty line. Educated and well off urban population lives not so very differently from their counterparts in other countries of similar income range, or even of their counterparts in Western countries. However, the poor and rural inhabitants of Pakistan are being left behind (World Bank, 2002). Due to scarce resources and financial constraints developing countries are unable to cope with the drastic demand for education and consequently non-formal education (NFE) seems blessing to meet this challenge of poverty alleviation.

Existing formal system of education especially in developing countries obviously cannot cope with the drastic demands of trained personnel. The demand for the trained personnel in Non-Formal Education as an alternative of formal education is being increased throughout the world. NFE consists of assortment of organized and semi organized activities operating outside the regular structure and routine of the formal system, aimed at serving a great variety of learning needs of different sub-group of population both young and old. NFE consists of assortment of organized and semi organized activity operating outside the regular structure and routine of the formal system, aimed at serving a great variety of learning needs of different sub-groups of population, both young and old. There are more than 9500 personnel involved in the human resource development through non-formal system of education in Punjab. At this stage formal system of education is unable to cope with the challenges of drastically increased demand for education. In this scenario non-formal education seems only cure for the development of human resources in rural areas. It has begun to play a dramatic role in elimination of poverty by educating those who have long been ignored in Pakistan; the country's rural and its poor.

Education, as a fundamental human right, is considered very important and strategic for developing their human resources. The right to education imposes an obligation upon countries to ensure that all children and citizens have opportunities to meet their basic learning needs. Pakistan, the second largest country in South Asia, is sixth most populous country in the world with a population of 176 million, of which approximately 61 percent lives in rural areas. Literacy

rate of Pakistan is nearly 54 percent: 65.25% for men, and 41.75% for women. While the rural (44% overall, 58% for men, and 29% for women) literacy rate indicates the alarming situation of the rural population. Embarrassing situation of literacy especially in rural areas of Pakistan is the result of low financial priority to education as well as ill-conceived non-consistent policies in the past.

For Pakistan to meet its education targets, the formal primary education system may undergo long-term reforms to reduce drop-out rates and increase access and quality of education. However, a short-term solution is also needed to ensure educational opportunities for children who have either dropped out or never joined the formal education system. To this end, the National Commission on Human Development establishes a network of community based non-formal schools. These non-formal schools are working as a support system addressing the immediate needs of the education sector while the Ministry of Education builds its own capacity to cover all of Pakistan. Children who graduate from the NFBE programmes can either join formal schools or vocational training programmes.

The commission is implementing the Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) programmes through selected NGOs. The human development incubators in each district are fund support and building capacities of NGOs delivering non-formal education. Incubators are provided with hired services such as school budgeting, account management and teacher training. The NFBE programmes are helping Government of Pakistan to achieve its primary education goals. In the rural areas of Gujranwala region 500 NFBE schools were being run by NGOs for the elimination of poverty and gender discrimination. These schools provide equal opportunities of education to male and female but virtually, all of the teachers and students of these schools were female District wise break up is given below:

**Table: 4.** Students and teachers in the NFBE Schools Gujranwala Region

Sr. No.	Name of District	NNFBE Schools	Total Students	Total Teachers
1.	Gujrat	85	1205	85
2.	Mandi Baha-ud-Din	95	1520	95
3.	Narowal	115	1625	115
4.	Hafiz Abad	90	1315	90
5.	Gujranwala	105	1535	105
6.	Sialkot	10	300	10
<b>7</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>7500</b>	<b>500</b>

It is evident from table: 1. that more about 8000 female (7500 students and 500 teachers) were enhancing their socio-economic standard by imparting and getting education in these NBFBE schools.

## MAIN PURPOSE

Main purpose of the study was to assess the role of Non-Formal Basic Education in women empowerment in Punjab and to evaluate the problems and issues of Non-Formal Basic Education in Punjab.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used survey approach of the descriptive research to find out the opinion of various personnel (students, teachers and administrators) of NFBE schools Gujranwala region (Gujrat, Mandi Baha-ud-Din, Narawal, Hafiz Abad, Gujranwala and Sialkot districts)..

## Population and Sampling

The population consisted of 7,500 students, 500 teachers and 100 administrators of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools. Therefore 10% of the students (750), 50% of the teachers (250) and 50% (50) administrators were taken as samples of the study. The samples were drawn from the master list of the respective populations using systematic random sampling technique.

## Instruments and Their Development

To elicit the opinions of the respective respondents, three questionnaires were developed on five-point Likert scale.

1. Questionnaire for students.
2. Questionnaire for teachers.
3. Questionnaire for administrators.

### Analysis of Data

Data collected through the questionnaires were presented in tabular form and analyzed by applying percentage and mean score formulas.

**Table: 5.** Opinion of students, teachers and administrators about physical facilities, availability and usability of audio visual aids (AV Aids)/educational technologies and teaching learning environment are given below.

Area	Theme	Students			Teachers			Administrators		
		f	%	$\bar{x}$	f	%	$\bar{x}$	f	%	$\bar{x}$
Physical facilities	Availability of electricity	348	67	2.49	175	73	2.2	34	74	2
	Availability of furniture	391	75	2.1	203	85	2	37	80	1.9
	Availability of toilets	362	69	2.2	202	85	2	35	76	1.8
A.V. Aids/ Educational technologies	Availability and usability of black board, charts and pictures	467	90	4.2	150	67	3.4	44	96	4.2
	Availability and usability of radio, ETV, computer and Internet.	349	69	2.3	204	86	1.9	34	74	1.9
Teaching learning environment	Friendly behaviour of teacher	493	95	4.2	196	82	3.9	31	67	4
	Individual learning	398	76	3.8	203	85	4	36	78	4.2
	Regularity of students	461	88	4	192	81	3.88	28	61	3.9
	Punctuality of teachers	406	78	3.8	187	79	3.9	38	83	4.1
	Checking of home work	435	83	4.03	166	70	3.5	27	59	3
	During course evaluation	432	82	3.79	231	97	4.4	45	98	4.5
	After course evaluation	398	76	3.9	237	99	4.5	45	98	4.5
	Regular supervision of NFBE schools	434	83	4.1	194	82	3.98	32	70	3.4
	Language of course (easy)	490	94	4.23	180	76	3.7	45	98	4.5
	Campaign through media	485	93	1.5	198	83	1.8	26	52	2.4

<b>Community participation</b>	Interest of community	364	70	3.5	15 1	63	3.2	30	65	3.5
	Help from eminent persons	392	75	3.6	18 3	77	3.5	31	67	3.5
	Organization of motivational campaign	378	73	3.4	13 8	58	3.4	26	52	2.4
	NFE programmes are income generating	387	74	3.6	16 4	69	3.5	32	70	3.5 8

**f= frequency of the respondents, %= percentage of the respondents and  $\bar{x}$  = mean value of the responses. To derive the mean score, scale value for this table was SA= 5, A= 4, UNC= 3, DA= 2 and SDA= 1**

It is evident from table 5 that about 70% ( students 67%, teachers 73% and administrators 74%) of the respondents are disagreed with the statement that physical facilities like electricity, toilets, classrooms and furniture are available at the NFBE schools ( mean score is respectively 2.49, 2.2 and 2). Majority of the students, teachers and administrators are of the view that black board, charts and pictures are used during teaching learning process in these schools ( mean score is respectively 4.2, 3.4 and 4.2)..Regarding availability and usability of AV Aids and educational technologies like radio, computer and Internet 90% students 67% teachers and 92% administrators opined that these devices are neither available nor used at these schools ( mean score is respectively 2.3, 1.9 and 1.9).. Dominant majority of the respondents are satisfied with teaching learning process, teaching learning environment, teaching methodologies, regularity of teachers and students, checking of home work, evaluation of students and teachers work, supervision of schools and the language of course as frequency of students, teachers and administrators agreed responses is more than 70% in all the statements of this theme and mean score is also more than 3 in all the statements of this theme as well. Similarly, dominant majority of the respondents (students, teachers and administrators) opined that community participation is active and positive as about all the statement agreed frequency ratio is more than 70% except disagreement regarding motivational campaign arrangement where negation rate is more than 60% from the respondents.

In open ended statement regarding problems and issues of NFBE schools 99% students opines that books were not provided well in time, 87% are of the view that class rooms were not available and there was no arrangement of co-curricular activities.

Insufficient remuneration is the major problem for teachers as 89% opine their stipend is not sufficient. Teachers are not briefed about their duties and responsibilities and orientation workshops are not arranged for them (87%). 7% opined that non availability of class rooms is another problem for them. Administrators describe lack of field staff (54%), insufficient remuneration of teachers (74%) and inadequate resources (84%) were major problem in this literacy campaign for them.

For the improvement of quality of NFBE schools (95%) students suggested that free note books and writing material should be given to them. 1% they should be given incentives and 98% opined that games should be arranged for them. 89% teachers suggested their remuneration should be revised and enhanced and orientation meetings should be conducted for them. Further, they suggested (91%) literacy campaign should be run media for the improvement of quality in these schools. Administrators (84%) suggested field staff should be appointed for enhancing the quality of these NFBE schools. Further, 74% suggested increase in teachers' remuneration and resources for the improvement of quality of these schools.

## RESULTS

Main results of the study are given below:

- NFBE schools are playing dynamic role in national development by uplifting socio economic status of masses especially in the rural areas.
- NBFE schools are also playing vital role in discriminating gender disparity by providing equal opportunities of education to male and the female as well.
- Virtually, all teachers and students of these NBFE schools were culturally restricted female.
- Teachers' remuneration was insufficient. It may be increased and students may also be provided incentives.
- Motivational campaigns were not conducted to create awareness and mobilization of community for maximum participation in the NBFE schools. Hence, motivational campaigns may be conducted through media.
- Students were provided free textbooks but not free notebooks and other writing material. Therefore, students may be provided free notebooks and other writing material.
- Provision of budget was insufficient hence; budget may be increased and used appropriately.
- The GOs and NGOs can run NFBE programmes more effectively. Therefore, the NFBE schools may run through the collaboration of GOs and NGOs.
- Timings of NFBE schools were not suitable. Timing of the NFBE Schools may be increased and adjusted in accordance with students' availability.
- Syllabus of the NFBE was informative, instructing and illustrated with diagrams.
- The language of NFBE courses was easy and syllabus of the NFBE was informative, instructing and illustrated with diagrams.
- Physical Facilities (electricity furniture, classrooms and toilets) may be provided in NFBE schools.
- Teachers may be briefed about the objectives of the course in orientations' sessions and they may be provided opportunities of refresher courses.
- All the schools of NFBE may be equipped with latest teaching aids and teachers may be provided the training to use these aids.
- Locally community may be involved in mobilizing the local resources.
- Follow up programmes may be started for literacy graduates.

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